A

SERMON

PREACH'D at the

ANNIVERSARY-MEETING

OF THE

CHARTER-HOUSE

Scholars:

AT THE

CHAPPEL

IN THE

Charter-Houſe.

On *Monday, December* 13th. 1680.

By *NATHANAEL RESBURY*, Miniſter of *Wandſworth* in the County of *Surrey*, and Chaplain to the Right Honorable *Arthur* E. of *Angleſey* Lord Privy Seal.

LONDON,
Printed for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Biſhop*'s Head in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, 1681.

A SERMON ON Matth. xxv. v. 40.

And the King ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, In as much as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

IT hath been a mighty out-cry in the Church of *Rome*, and the calumny hath vended amongſt the multitude, like other groundleſs Traditions, that our Religion is ſo meer a brag of Faith, that to ſhow how perfectly it diſclaims all kind of dependance upon the merit of good works, it diſcharges its Profeſſors from all obligations of doing them; and had not our Anceſtry (whiles govern'd by the Noble and generous principles of a munificent devotion and piety) erected ſuch Monuments of the uſefulneſs and

excellency of their Religion, we had had no ſuch auguſt fabricks for performing the Solemnities of our Worſhip, as now we have, but had contented our Selves probably with an ungarniſht ὑπερῶον, ſome neglected upper-room, which the rage and tyranny of the Age, made the Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians, through fear of obſervation, meet in. Much leſs had we known what an Hoſpital had meant, or any uſeful communities ſupported by the alms and pious diſpoſals of ſuch whom the *Romiſh* faith had inſpir'd to it.

But this clamour certainly, as it was only rais'd before the reform'd Religion had time or capacity of exerting it ſelf in practice in that kind; ſo it were ſtrange if it could be kept up now amongſt any, but thoſe who have never ſeen, or read of the conſtitutions or manners of a Nation, wherein this Religion is profeſt.

For as to the former, I mean our Churches, we have had (God knows) too late and ſad an occaſion to ſhow, what the mind conducted by the Proteſtant Faith can do, when with ſo much largeneſs and alacrity we have rebuilt the Churches their Helliſh rage had burnt; and exceeded in the decency and ornaments of thoſe places, though not led to it by the blind and ignorant dictates of a fond and unreaſonable Superſtition; which

which we find ſo inconſiſtent with it ſelf, that it can as furiouſly deſtroy thoſe foundations, and lay the whole ſtructure in aſhes, the building of which they have inſiſted on, as one plauſible argument for their Religion, and the devotion of their Anceſtry.

As to the latter, I mean the erecting of Hoſpitals, and conſtituting other uſeful Societies from the mighty ſupplies which the good and well-diſpos'd minds of thoſe within our Church have thought fit to adminiſter. Were it worth the while to enumerate what foundations have been laid for the poor and diſabled in Hoſpitals and Alms-houſes, for education and encouragement to the ingenuous in Schools and Colledges, for the painful and induſtrious in Corporations and Work-houſes, for the maintenance of thoſe that attend at the Altars, and miniſter in Holy things; in a word, what large and proſuſe iſſues have been from the wealth and charity of ſome amongſt our ſelves, for all the juſt uſes and conveniencies of life, from the time of the firſt Reformation to this day, it would be found there hath been as much life in our faith, for the product of Good Works, as ever hath been in any one Age of the Church, ſince the time that a community of goods, made the mutual love of Primitive Chriſtians, ſo great and remarkable:

And

And amongſt the reſt, I may very well ſay that this very Place, the memory of whoſe Founder we celebrate this day, becomes a ſtanding eviction to the knavery of that calumny, whereby the Proteſtant Religion hath been ſcandaliz'd, as a cold, and barren, and empty name, that hath nothing of the thing or ſubſtance of good works in it. A Foundation this is, which having been firſt laid without any other Miniſtry, but that of one ſingle Purſe; and having had no other improvements, but what the products within it ſelf, may have ſwell'd and increas'd it to; is beyond all the inſtances that can be elſewhere given, either at home or abroad; no one place in *Europe* probably, or within the whole diffuſions of Chriſtianity, having either beforehand ſet the like Copy, or wrote after this, ſince; the Summ total of this Charity amounting to a far larger account (as it hath ſerv'd to much greater purpoſes) than that Cloyſter of *Carthuſians*, which formerly had, to ſo idle and miſtaken uſes, neſtled here.

It is true, the Principles have not been the ſame upon which have been grounded this, or other Foundations of our Proteſtant Charity, with what have influenc'd thoſe in the Church of *Rome*; nor have there been thoſe wretched artifices us'd, as conſequent to thoſe principles, by which

which the Brokers for the *Romish* Charity have been so successful in the solicits they have made for the revenues of it. We have not first possest the World with any frightful perswasions about the Torments of a Purgatory, pretending it the lot of most Men to pass through the refinings of that fire into the state of the blessed; and that the Prayers of some devout Persons secluded from the World to that purpose, together with some other Ministries, will hasten the dispatches of those Souls from thence, who have had the devotion, and the fortune to give liberally toward the maintenance of such Chauntries.

We have no Doctrines that teach any expiatory and atoning merit in such works as these, so as to give us the opportunity of screwing out of the confessions of some sinners, such Sums for commutation of Penance, or satisfaction to Divine Justice as may build a Monastery or add to the supports of one already built. We erect no Foundations upon the Sins of the People; we dismiss not the Soul of the unruly Tyrant, who hath besmear'd himself with the bloud of numberless Innocents, and rais'd his dominion upon the Necks of just Proprietors, we dismiss not such an one with this appeasement of conscience, under all the horrors of his butchery and injustice, that might reasonably rack and torment him;

him; *if you build ſuch a Religious houſe, or give ſo much into the Treaſury of the Church, you will find your ſelf abſolv'd there, and ſo all the ſcores of bloud and uſurpation wip'd out for ever.*

We do not tell the infamous Lecher, that hath done infinite injuries to Families by his boundleſs luſt, and made himſelf a ſtink and abhorrence, by the Diſeaſe that Vengeance allots to that Vice, we do not tell ſuch an one, that his Charity toward a Nunnery (where the vow'd chaſtity of thoſe Secluſes may recompence for his beaſtlineſs) will ſecure his forgiveneſs in the other World, and his reputation in this; Whereas in truth, that very Convent which the Money of ſuch a Wretch may have endow'd or augmented, may prove his Heir in his filthineſſes, as well as his eſtate; and by a Pile of Skuls of the poor murder'd Infants (begot in thoſe ſecrecies of Villany) may raiſe a proper and adequate Monument to the Luſt of the firſt Founder.

We do not pretend that thoſe Goods, which the Rapine of ſome hath unjuſtly extorted from the right owners, or which the prodigious avarice of others hath congeſted to the ſcandal and reproach of himſelf, or the injury of his relatives; that ſuch, if converted to Religious uſes, when the fate of the Poſſeſſor hath ſet him for ever out of the reach of them, will make him ſuch friends

friends here, and above too, that the Prayers of the one, and the intereſt of the other ſhall lodge him ſafely enough in *Abraham*'s boſom.

No, the undeſigning plainneſs of our Doctrines, ſo directly ſuited to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, hath laid bare all the cheats and wheadles of that kind; and by propounding and clearing up all the true notions of repentance and faith, and a good life, have made all that ſort of diſguiſes ſo thin and airy, that we have made our ſelves uncapable of Juggling by ſuch artifices; and what acts of charity are now perform'd amongſt us; as they are always deſign'd toward the beſt and moſt uſeful purpoſes of life; not for the ſatiating of ſome lazy Monks, or idle Goſſips, whoſe ſloth, and whoſe plenty, inſtead of the Divine and contemplative life, which they pretend, expoſeth them to all the temptations of luſt and wantonneſs: as (I ſay) the acts of our Charity have not this tendency, but to better deſigns, ſo they are grounded from better Principles, and promoted by more Chriſtian perſwaſions in the breaſts of the Donors.

The intentions of our charity are chiefly directed againſt Idleneſs the Nurſery of all Vices: or toward the relief of ſuch Perſons whom po-

verty or other misfortunes may have reduc'd to the extremeſt diſablements: or, in a word, the inſtitution of ingenuity in Youth, or compoſure of thoughtfulneſs and ſolicitude in old Age, that ſome after a long and cumberſome part acted, may have the advantage of retiring themſelves, where, freed from the cares or the hazards of this life, they may in all repentance and devotion make up the reckonings betwixt their Souls and God, and fit themſelves for the Summons they muſt expect at his Bar: and of ſuch a Nature is this great and almoſt unparallel'd Foundation, where ſo many Youths may be ſhap'd and modell'd for ſervice in the World, and ſo many aged Gentlemen drawn off and eas'd after the ſervice they have done, and put into circumſtances, wherein they need be thoughtful about nothing but Immortality.

The Principles of which (no queſtion) were, that Humanity and Brotherly love which the Chriſtian Religion eſpecially teacheth; that truſt and ſtewardſhip which we are told in the Scriptures, is repos'd in great and rich Men; that affinity and kindred, which bounty and mercifulneſs hath with all other parts of goodneſs and righteouſneſs, and, to add no more, that relation and nearneſs which the Founder of our Religi-

on,

on, the Bleſſed Jeſus, the Man-Chriſt doth own with thoſe of our natures, transferring the obligations of all good turns done to one another, as done unto himſelf; for ſo it is in the words of my Text, *Verily I ſay unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*

Theſe words are part of the repreſentation which our Lord makes of his appearing in Judgment at the end of the World, where he pronounces the different Sentence upon thoſe on the *right hand*, and *on the left*; The former he inſtates in all the glories *of a Kingdom prepared for them from the foundations of the World*, *v.* 34. The latter he baniſheth from his preſence and all the bliſs of it, *into everlaſting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, *v.* 41. And the account of this different ſentence alledg'd and explain'd: *viz.* the good deeds that thoſe on the *right hand* had done, in feeding the *hungry* and relieving the *ſtranger*, clothing the *naked* and *viſiting the ſick*: and the neglects that thoſe on the *left hand* had been guilty of, in all thoſe excellent ſervices which they had the obligation and opportunity of performing: à *v.* 35. *ad finem.*

I ſhall take no occaſion here to make any re-

marks upon this great Court of Judicature, nor consider the nature of the Process: I shall not determine for or against the conjecture of the learned *Grotius*, who would suppose (for which he also cites some considerable Fathers for strengthening his presumption) that this Scene of judgment seems only laid for the Christian World, whiles they that either had not known God, or rejected his Gospel, were by their disbelief *condemn'd already*. All that I shall do, shall be with a direct eye upon what suits with the nature and reasons of this Assembly, wherein some of us that have in this place had our first institution of Youth, and others of us that have had with our Education, our Maintenance too, do unitedly meet to recognize that bulky charity of our Founder, that hath given us the opportunity of either. So that because throughout this whole Scene of action represented in the last Judgment, we may observe, partly that no other instances of life are mention'd or insisted on, but the extent or defect of Mens charity or good deeds; and partly the mighty acknowledgments which the Great Judge makes of such good deeds, as if the performance or neglect redounded upon himself; I shall make this communicative charity the subject of my remaining Discourse, and as briefly as I can dispatch what

Lactant. Hieron. Theophylact.

I

I have to say under two or three Heads, which may abundantly vindicate the Doctrines and the effects of the Protestant Faith, as by no means foreign to Good Works.

1. First, there is no duty or performance in the whole Christian Law more expresly prescrib'd and insisted on, than this of Alms-giving, or doing good to those that shall stand in need of it. This, I might argue, without mustering up the various injunctions in the Gospel, that look this way, from what we find urg'd in my Text, that our Blessed Lord should account such works, of so weighty an importance, that he makes it his κριτήριον, or the ground of his sentence, to absolve or condemn Mankind according to what they have done or not done in this kind. He does not here insist on the Orthodoxy of their Religion, what Principles or Party they had espous'd, how demurely they had liv'd, what numbers or length of Prayers they had wonted themselves to, how many Fasts they had kept, or Sermons they had heard, (though herein the answer of a good conscience will be abundantly valuable at that day) but the reckoning is made upon the visits that have been given to the sick, what clothing to the naked, what food to the hungry, what protection and relief

to

to the oppreſs'd and indigent? after which Copy the Apoſtle writes, when he tells us that this is the Religion indeed; *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their affliction*, &c. It is a cheaper and eaſier performance to maintain a ſemblable regard for the duties of the firſt Table in our Devotions toward God, than this coſtly and active part of love toward our Neighbour, as comprehended in the ſecond Table of the Law. There were thoſe in our Saviour's time, who, while they were *devouring Widows houſes*, could, in that very *pretence be making long prayers*, and it was Saint *Baſil*'s obſervation ſince that; Οἶδα πολλοὺς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους, γενάζοντας, πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον ἐυλάβειαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν δὲ ἵνα μὴ περιεμένους τοῖς θλιβομένοις. *I have known ſome that could faſt, and pray, and groan, and be very dextrous at all the guiſes of a cheap and unexpenſive Religion, and yet they have not the heart to give one Farthing to the Poor.* There is nothing new under the Sun; the obſervation both of our Saviour's and this Father's, is as freſh and pertinent (God knows) in the Age we live in as ever.

Fam. 1. 17.

Matth. 23. 14.

Baſ. M. in Luc. 12. 8.

But however diſproportion'd the lives of ſome Chriſtians are, or have been to their Law of Faith; yet have they no more explicit injunctions

junctions in any thing than in this: Our Saviour having not only adopted the Moral Law into his, as he hath ſumm'd it up under thoſe two great heads of *love to God* and *love to our Neighbours*; but alſo explain'd and extended the obligation of that part that concerns our Neighbor, even to the *loving our enemies*, and *doing good to thoſe* that have wiſht or done us hurt. So gentle, ſo good natur'd a Religion indeed became him whoſe errand into the World was to accompliſh a charitable work which goes beyond the comprehenſions of Angels to indict juſt praiſes to.

Matth. 22. 37-39.

Matth. 5. 44.

To ſay the truth, this Law of Charity is inſeparably indented in humane nature, to which indeed though the whole Chriſtian Law (ſo far as it concerns our practice) does bear a ſuitableneſs and correſpondency, yet doth this inſtance of it ſeem more immediately connate and agreeable, as in relieving any perplext and diſtreſs'd part of humane Nature, we labour in ſomething that is Natural, that is, the preſervation of ſelf, which whiles we withdraw from, we are in ſome meaſure in that unreaſonable confederacy repreſented in *Menenius Agrippa*'s Apologue, where the reſt of the Members would withhold their miniſtries from the belly till the whole ſtarv'd.

And

And as it is a Law engraven even in humane Nature as ſo, ſo let me add, that it is an eternal Law, that is, it hath the eternal and unchangeable reaſons of good in it, *viz.* of doing good where the neceſſities of an occaſion ſhall offer. It is true indeed, ſuch was not the original frame and diſpoſure of Mankind, but that had it not been for the depravation of humane Nature, this Law of Beneficence might have been ſuperſeded for ever. Providence was not unequal in the proviſions it made, but as the Sun and the Stars which were always out of the reach of the Ambitious or the Envious, do ſtill diffuſe their univerſal heat and influence, according to their firſt ordinance and appointment, ſo would all the riches and products of the Earth and of the Sea have indifferently ſubſerv'd for the abundant ſupply of all Mortals, there being enough in the boſom and repoſitory of Nature for every one to have fetcht his ſufficiencies; but Ambition and Rapine made the Invaſion, and ſince that, Power and cunning hath ſecur'd the acquiſt, Divine Providence having ſo far interpos'd for the order and government of the World, as to make the liberality of thoſe who find themſelves plentifully poſſeſt, where they diffuſe it toward the attempering the extreme wants of others, and the patience and content-

edneſs

edneſs of thoſe whoſe boundaries are more narrow and ſtraiten'd, equally a vertue, and equally well-pleaſing in his ſight. And this is that now, which makes up the lovely harmony and gives the beauty of agreement in things ſo widely different and diſproportion'd; when the poor can in a ſtill and quiet ſubmiſſion both ſerve and depend upon the Rich, and the Rich do not defeat the expectations of the Poor, but (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, 2 *Cor.* 8. 14.) *one Man's abundance ſupplies another man's wants*, and in ſome meaſure *makes the equality*. It was a generous expreſſion of him in *Seneca*; *Ego mea ſic habeo ut omnium ſint.* I do ſo far poſſeſs what I have, that it is every ones elſe.

Hence in that œconomy amongſt the *Jewes*, which was ſo peculiarly of God's immediate diſpenſing and regulation, we find the thirtieth part of every Man's in-come (as may be collected from the various tythings allotted for the Poor) was the *ultimum quod ſic*; the very leaſt of a neceſſary charity that muſt be ſet apart for the relief of the needy, and the obſervation of that charity run into the account of juſtice and righteouſneſs; he was not an honeſt man that would not be punctual and ſtrict in it: he was one of an evil eye (as the *Jewiſh* Authors expreſs it) that

extended not his bounty to ſomething conſider-ably more. To which purpoſe (perhaps) we may conjecture the reaſon why, when our Chri-ſtian Law inſiſts upon ſuch ſtrict and repeated commands for our charity, it preſcribes no ſtated meaſures for it; becauſe it would not ſuppoſe us bounded by any of the ſcantlings which former Laws have intimated. But, firſt, we have infi-nitely greater examples before us, than had ever yet been propounded to the World; ſuch was the Lord of Life and Glory himſelf, who *though*
2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *he was rich, yet for our ſakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.* He emptied himſelf of all that he was veſted in, or had a title to, as to all the riches of his Kingdom above, with all the imaginable grandeurs of this World below, that by this voluntary beggary of his own, we, who had been ſo helpleſly and fatally im-poveriſht, might be not only reſtor'd to our ori-ginal honours, but to an Inheritance with Him-ſelf, beyond all degrees what we could have pre-tended to.

Such was that other inſtance of a large and unbounded Charity in the firſt Chriſtians, who, to ſhow how much this was the Doctrine and Life of the Religion they had engag'd in, did
Act. 4. 34. 35. quit their own properties ſo far, where they had any,

any, as by equal portions only, to ſhare with the indigent Brotherhood; that (as the Apoſtle applies the paſſage of the *Iſraelites* gathering *Manna* in the Wilderneſs) *He that had gather'd much, had nothing over, and he that had gather'd little had no lack.* 2 Cor. 8. 15.

And as we have ſuch tranſcendent examples built upon the Doctrines of Charity in our Law of Faith, ſo we may ſuppoſe our ſelves under obligations of larger diſplays of this vertue, than any other Law had yet directed Men to. Which conſiderations probably, (beſides the exigencies which the Church in its perſecuted ſtate muſt needs conflict with, before it had the Patronage of Kings and Emperours) might fill the Pens of the ancient Writers with ſuch large and importunate Exhortations to Charity; In ſo much that ſometimes they charge ſuch with rapine that convert what they have, beyond meer neceſſaries, to their own uſe; and therefore repreſent the richeſt Men but ſuch Stewards, who are to make their Accounts to the Poor for all redundancy, beyond what themſelves may modeſtly need; and at other times do Rhetorically bring the Poor upon the Stage, as claiming his propriety in that Silk, or that Gold wherein the gaudy Chriſtian will ruffle it; in thoſe diſguiz'd, and various Meſſes, wherein the humorſome ap-

petite will play the wanton even to a ſurfeit, as part of which ſhould have cloath'd his nakedneſs, and reliev'd his hunger, and the unjuſt waſt muſt therefore be accounted for at another Bar. Theſe things, however perhaps too ſeverely ſpoke, at leaſt not to paſs current without the clearing up of ſome caſes, which time will not allow to be at preſent diſcuſs'd; yet are in thus much ſignificant, that they teach us what ſenſe the Ancients had of their obligations to Charity from the Laws of Chriſtianity, and that we have indeed no boundaries to its diffuſiveneſs, but only the prudent conſiderations of our dependencies, that neither our ſelves nor they ſhould really ſuffer, or be impoveriſh'd, through our unſeaſonable liberalities; and yet even as to this we are prevented all needleſs and unreaſonable fears, by the warranty it hath pleas'd God to give us, both by his Word and Providence.

2. As there is no duty which is more expreſly preſcrib'd by the Chriſtian Law, than this of Charity, ſo there are no encouragements wanting to excite us to a chearful performance of it, although we ſuppoſe no expiation or attonement for ſin, no merit or deſert from God by the utmoſt we can do in it. It is very true, that ſuch are our circumſtances with God, through an antecedent

tecedent guilt that hath made us ſo obnoxious, that after all we can do, *we muſt needs ſay we are unprofitable ſervants.* Sin is of that nature, that it makes every action of the man who is imbas'd and deprav'd by it, to be (in ſtricteſt account with God) unlovely and unacceptable; and no future performances can make up for the defects of former, becauſe the utmoſt of all was due at firſt: However, if we are not amongſt the meer Mercenaries and ſtipendiaries in Religion, we may find thoſe encouragements to this vertue, which may render all the wheadles of *ſatisfaction* or *merit* needleſs and inſignificant toward the making us converſant and exemplary in it. Luk. 17. 10.

As to this, I would not uſe the argument of applauſe and acceptation amongſt Men, becauſe this is a qualification in our Charity which our Bleſſed Lord hath expreſly preſcrib'd againſt; though at the ſame time he aſſures us this is an inſeparable reward to it. We ſhould not *blow the Trumpet before our Alms*, to be ſeen and applauded by Men, though if we ſhould do ſo, we ſhould hardly miſs of that reward. *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward.* This is an excellency that hath ſo univerſal an acceptation amongſt Men, that he that hath the moſt abandon'd it himſelf, either commends, or envies it Matt. 6. 2.

in

in another; and the Philoſopher ſpoke ſmartly enough when he told the Children of his Benefactor, that he ſtood upon even ground with their Father for all his munificence, becauſe he had given him the credit of it; for all Men ſpake well of him for his bounty to *Xenocrates*.

But this is a thought unworthy the *Chriſtian*, and therefore ought not to be urg'd in this place. However, may I not intimate ſomething of the natural pleaſure that always lives and glowes in the mind thus employ'd? As it is hardly ſeparable in the humane Nature, but it muſt be uneaſie and afflicted in whatſoever it ſees miſerable in its own kind, ſo there is as immediate a joy and well-pleaſedneſs of mind where we are in the leaſt inſtrumental in its eaſe and relief. To make the ſad and dejected countenance put on ſmiles; not only to ſtill his groans, but turn them into laughter, and to change the complaints and murmurs of the Poor reduc'd Caitiff into Thankſgivings to Providence, good wiſhes and bleſſings to our ſelves, which perhaps may mingle with our own Prayers (as thoſe of the devout *Centurion* and prepare a ſpeedier deſcent of ſome ſignal good to us; what can be more inwardly delightſome and agreeable to a well temper'd mind than this is? There is no good mind that can forbear ſharing

Acts 10.4.

in

in anothers joys, and intereſting it ſelf ſo far in all the good dews that fall, though they reach not his own fleece, that even the pleaſure he conceives in anothers happineſs, does ſtill derive ſomething of it to himſelf. It was the Angelical temper, to unite in one tranſported Quire, and make their Songs give notice to the World how rejoyc'd they were in the behalf of Man when His *Saviour was born*: And it is a part of their good natur'd Heaven ſtill, that they can frame a new *joy at the converſion of a ſinner*. Much more may it reflect a grateful touch upon the mind, when the Man himſelf hath been the Benefactor. This is a God-like complacency, when our own full and entire happineſs, gives us not that reſt and content, but that we muſt be endeavouring, what in us lies, to make others ſo: God himſelf reſted not in the perfections of his own bliſs, till he had created beings to whom he might communicate, and make them happy in ſome derivative effluxes of himſelf: and the *Bleſſed Jeſus* would fill up that eternity of delight he had in the *boſom of his Father*, with the pleaſure he took in that unſpeakable act of Grace, ſaving Mankind, by interpoſing himſelf betwixt the ſtroke and death. It is an indication of the real joys that attend every act of beneficence, when it hath been ſo much delight to the ever bleſſed

Luk. 2. 13, 14.

Luk. 15. 10.

God

God himſelf to be thus doing good. *Epicurus* who made pleaſure his God, yet declar'd this to be a part of that pleaſure, τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν, to be doing good; and he that was God himſelf, that had lain in the boſom of Pleaſure from all eternity, left this as one of his Maxims when he taught in the World, which St. *Paul* quotes from him, either by the help of Tradition or Revelation: *Remember the words of our Lord Jeſus, how he* Acts 20. 35. *ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.*

I may add (amongſt many others) laſtly, the grand encouragement in the Text, that our Lord, the Judge himſelf will not diſdain to own the good that we have done to any other, as if it had been done unto himſelf. *He is not aſham'd* Heb. 2. 11. to own the leaſt of his ſervants under the name and dignity of *his brethren*; and to ſuch (whiles we do it with regard to that relation and affinity with him) he tells us elſewhere that a *Cup of cold water* Matth. 10. 42. is regiſtred as a gift that ſhall be accounted for, when the rewards come to be diſtributed.

Oh! wondrous condeſcenſion, that the *Bleſſed Jeſus* ſhould proclaim himſelf ſtill walking in rags, or ſhackled in a Dungeon, and that whiles we are feeding the Beggar, we make Chriſt our Gueſt! who would not gladly pare off all his ſuper-

ſuperfluities of life, that he might always have ready an entertainment for ſo great a Perſonage when he craves an alms? Had *Abraham* known the quality of his Gueſts while he invited Angels in, he would not have thought his whole ſubſtance a competent entertainment: We have the word of our Lord himſelf for it, and may be ſure we are treating Him, whiles we relieve the real ſufferer that craves it in his Name. *In as much as ye have done it to one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* What an infinite honour is it to be capable thus of *laying up our Treaſures in Heaven*? to cloth and feed him *whoſe is the Earth with all its fulneſs*? to relieve and viſit him whoſe is Heaven it ſelf with all its Joys and Glories? It might well be eſteem'd one of the ſeverer parts of the Eccleſiaſtical cenſure in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, not to ſuffer ſome kind of offenders to caſt in their charity into the offertory; and ſo *Epiphanius* tells us, προσφορὰς λαμβάνομεν παρὰ τῶν, ὑκ ἀδικούντων ὐδὲ παρανομούντων, ἀλλὰ δικαίως ζώντων. *We accept of no offerings from unjuſt or wicked men, but from thoſe that live well.* It was too great an honour for ſuch to be permitted to give good Men their alms, or that ſuch whom Chriſt had ſo near a relation to, ſhould be beholding to his enemies.

These Considerations (I say) give Charity and good Works so high an estimate, that if we seriously entertain'd them, we need not, with the Church of *Rome* make lies our refuge, or make use of their lewd arguments from *merit*, or *satisfaction*, or a quicker dispatch from Purgatory, to animate to well-doing, because there are sufficient encouragements, we might derive from hence, which none but the Infidel or most abandon'd Sensualist would account trivial, and not worthy to be govern'd and perswaded by.

3. Lastly, There are some fair and plausible appearances of this Charity, which yet really and indeed ought not to be esteem'd as so, because they answer not the true purposes and ends of it. We have some instances amongst our selves against which our Laws have wisely provided; such are our idle wanderers, who, though they may have the Plea of hunger, and cold, and nakedness, to urge and perswade our compassion toward them, yet having hands, and health, and strength, which by their own industry might labour out a supply to themselves, our Laws forbid the encouragement of such, and that upon the great Apostolical Foundation, that *if any would not work, neither should they eat.* 2 *Thess.* 3. 10. These are not within the kindred of our Blessed Lord:

Though

Though he was poor, yet was not he idle and unactive himself, but spent his whole life in the *labours of love*: *He went about doing good*; and so he expects from all his *household of faith*. Act. 10. 38.

Upon which occasion, I might again reflect upon most of the Religious Foundations in the Church of *Rome*; Perhaps the rise and original of such, might of old have been warrantable enough; whilst the Devotionist in those Societies had the real opportunities of withdrawing from the World, and contemplating the future state; and by severest mortifications and self-denial at home, as also industrious and exemplary instructions abroad might put himself and others into a ready posture for another World: this was to the true purposes and ends of Charity, and whoever by their beneficence begun or encourag'd such foundations as these, will be own'd by *Christ*, as having serv'd and supply'd Him in *those his Brethren*. But what shall we say now to those Nurseries either of Scandal or Mischief, into which the Religious-houses abroad are even Universally perverted? where either the luxury and lust of a pamper'd and well-fed Monk, the wantonness and dalliances of an idle and unwilling Nun, hath been the scoptick theme of witty and observing Men for some Ages. Or else if

in other Societies they make not idleneſs their choice, and pretend not ſo much to the contemplative, as to the buſie and active life; what is the reſult of this induſtry, (eſpecially in theſe laſt Ages of Jeſuitiſm) but ſearching into the Councils of Kingdoms, and States, and labouring out a miſchievous intereſt from the intelligence they gain: perplexing and involving the World in Wars and Bloud; making the Thrones of Kings either unſafe or uneaſie, contriving Subverſions of Government, or Helliſh Maſſacres, and all for advancing the Tyranny and Pride of an Apoſtate *Prelate*, to whoſe obedience and intereſts they have bound and oblig'd themſelves, by Vows as impious as Hell it ſelf could invent. The founding and endowing ſuch confederacies as theſe, is ſo far from doing good to the *brethren*, that it will be found at laſt a maintenance and ſupport to the enemies of the *Holy Jeſus*; however they may abuſe and preſume upon that Name of his to diſtinguiſh the fraternity.

But, thanks be to God, it is not ſo with us in any of our foundations of Charity; it is leaſt of all ſo, in this, which we at preſent commemorate.

Here the Parent is diſburthen'd from the cares and expences of his Child's education, and hath a moral

moral assurance from the first entry and admission of him here, that he is not only provided for, but likely to act a very useful and serviceable part upon the Stage of this World, either in the Church or in the Commonwealth. And here old age may compose it self, and having disintangled it self from all the bustles and the snares of an active employ'd life, may be at leisure to look backward, and repent of all the miscarriages of times past, and in doing so, may look forward with a well-grounded hope of closing up the whole in peace and bliss. Oh what a Crown of Joy is it likely to prove to our Founder, at the last great Solemnity, when he shall stand at the head of a numerous happy croud, who have had the opportunities of living usefully, and dying successfully, through the ministry of that significant charity of his!

Let me therefore, as an upshot to this discourse, bespeak both the Youth and the Age of this place, that you would in your different spheres and capacities think your selves more peculiarly oblig'd by the bounty of this great Man, and kind allotments of Providence in giving you a share in it; to answer the ends and designs of it; the young ones, *in remembring your Creator now in the days of your Youth*, improving the advantages you have both Eccl. 12. 1.

for

for Learning and Piety, that His Memory may live in the fragrant ſavours of your Lives, and others may be encourag'd to multiply ſuch works, when they diſcern ſuch excellent effects of it in
v. 13. you. And you Fathers, the *Keepers of whoſe houſe do* now begin to *tremble*; The decays of whoſe age aſſure you that the flame of life is dwindling and almoſt ſpent off; However you may have liv'd, make it your whole buſineſs to dye well: Let no pretended cares of life divert you, becauſe the unlabour'd liberalities that feed and cloth you now have ſuperſeded all; but, as you are in reaſons of Nature haſtening to the endleſs ſtate; ſo take hold of this ſeaſon of leiſure and retirement for making up your laſt periods in that devotion and ſerioufneſs, that when the great Judge ſhall come to reckon up the good deeds of our mighty Benefactor, your ſelves may be amongſt the Number he ſhall point at, when he owns that they were *done to theſe his brethren*. Which God of his infinite mercy grant, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, to whom with Himſelf and Holy Spirit, be given all Praiſe and Glory for ever. *Amen!*

THE END.